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any one class becomes too powerful is doomed. Such a government is certain either to be replaced by a despotism or to degenerate into anarchy, which means suffering for every one, and above all for those whose daily bread depends on their daily toil. If this country is to play a glorious part in the world, if future generations are to point to it as one of the great forces in the progress of mankind, it must make a success of democracy. Other nations may seek refuge under different forms of government. Germany can take shelter under her monarchs, France can return to a Cæsar, England can, perhaps, restore her aristocracy, but, as far as human foresight can reach, America has no resource but democracy, and to make democracy a success, the classes must learn to understand each other and to have mutual forbearance and sympathy. If we do not learn this lesson, our retribution will be decrepitude and ruin, and that retribution will have been deserved.

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## THE CONSCIENCE: ITS NATURE AND ORIGIN.

I. IN any matter of investigation, it is a great point gained to have obtained a clear idea as to what the precise problems to be investigated are. Kant's most conspicuous service to ethical science consists in his having secured a practically universal recognition for the fact that one of the things that any theory of the nature and origin of the conscience must account for is the absence of all consideration of personal consequences, in this world or the next, in action that can claim the sense of duty as its motive. Cudworth, indeed, in his day had entered a protest no less emphatic than Kant's against such conceptions of duty as Paley afterwards set forth; but it is due to Kant that they can never in their bald and undisguised form, at any rate, be set forth again. While, however, the mercenarian theory, as regards its application to a future life, is very properly scouted by most ethical writers at the present day, another

variety of the same theory—Mr. Spencer's—which maintains that it is the experience of rewards and punishments accorded in this world during many generations to right and wrong action respectively that has evolved the conception of duty, is one that is very widely accepted.

2. Before going into special questions affecting the Moral Faculty more in detail, it will be well to draw attention to the nature of the general psychological hypothesis that such a contention postulates. It postulates the possibility, in psychology, of transformations that follow the analogy of chemistry; metamorphoses which we can observe, but which we cannot so much as attempt to understand. The two Mills, in express terms, put forward such a hypothesis, and thus arrived at the conclusion that, in mental science, every mystery which could not otherwise be solved could be adequately explained by the formula that it was the result of "inseparable association." In chemical investigation, however, our situation as regards the subject-matters that we deal with is very different from that which obtains in reference to the matters of psychological investigation. We know that the mixture of oxygen and hydrogen has been transformed into water, because we have the water still in the same jar in which the gases were, and because we can transform it back into the gases. In mental change, on the contrary, such connecting links between the phenomenon in its old form and in its new, supposing transformations to take place, are altogether wanting. We are left thus without the means that we possess in chemistry of discriminating between the transformations of one thing into various shapes, and the mere sequences of things that, in themselves, are entirely different. Hence, to admit explanations of psychological problems based on the analogy of chemical change would be really to give up psychology, and with it the scientific treatment of politics, history, or literature, altogether. Such a concession would, at once, open the flood-gates to a deluge of paradoxes and absurdities. There would then be no such thing in mental science as the *reductio ad impossibile*. No conceivable statement could be so preposterous that it would be, at once, and of necessity, rejected. We

should have to admit that it was quite possible that plurality and totality were the same thing as truth and goodness, that pleasures and pains might be nothing but flexions and extensions of the muscles, that Mind and Will might be merely the dummies of a conjurer, put forward to attract our attention, while what we imagined them to be doing was really being done by other agencies altogether. Every assertion, indeed, would be, for us, alike possible and alike meaningless.

3. It will not, however, I imagine, be denied that there is such a thing as the *reductio ad impossibile* in mental science, and it is worth while to examine, for a moment, in what circumstances its application is possible. Though we think of it as a special form of argument, it enters, in physics, into every process of reasoning by which any general truth is established. What Mill lays down, in regard to Deduction, is true of all reasoning. It always comprises an Induction, a Ratiocination, and a Verification. What we call the *reductio ad impossibile* is simply the contrary of the Verification. It is the refutation of a false induction by direct comparison with fact. The inductions of physics have, no doubt, an immense advantage over the inductions of the subject sciences, in the tangible and palpable nature of the facts, by comparison with which they can be tested. The latter must, however, be capable of being, in some sense, tested by comparison with fact also, otherwise our best established psychological truths would be no truer than the idlest fancies. At the same time, when we look into the matter, it is not altogether obvious, on the surface, what it is, in mental science, that corresponds to fact in physics. If any one contends that the specific gravity of lead is not greater than that of water, I can drop a piece of lead into water and let him see for himself that it is so. Even here, of course, there is the all-important postulate that he and I mean the same thing by lead, by specific gravity, and by water. We cannot adequately define either lead or water, but we have another resource for making certain that there shall be no mistake nor misunderstanding on that point. We can point them out, and in pointing them out and observing their interaction, we can practically point out what their specific gravity

means also. If any one should give vent to some psychological absurdity, such as, for example, that Hope is a disagreeable emotion, we cannot deal with him in the same simple fashion. I can appeal to my consciousness, and say that I do not find it so. If he appeals to his consciousness, and says that he does, it might seem at first sight that there the matter must end. A recent school of psychologists, indeed, who profess to be more scientific than the rest of us, do, as a matter of fact, contend that further controversy in such circumstances is impossible. If, however, the world generally accepted that view in all parallel cases, then literature in many of its forms—all newspaper literature, for instance—would come to a stand-still. All controversy that is not controversy about physical facts must be controversy about mental facts. We cannot, indeed, indicate and exhibit examples of Hope and of the Disagreeable Emotion as we can examples of Lead and Water. As, however, psychological controversy, in one form or another, is one of the great facts of the world, it is quite certain that we can achieve, more or less perfectly, the same end in some other manner. What we have to inquire into therefore is, How is it that, in psychological inquiries, we can make certain that the things which are the subject of our inquiries are the same? That we can do it somehow or other is quite beyond question. What is it that, for instance, fixes the identity of the concept "Hope," regarded as the concept of different minds? We know what fixes the identity of a leaden bullet as between the perceptions of one mind and those of another. It is the physical fact that I can lay my finger on it, and that you cannot lay yours there while mine remains there. As regards Hope, we have no resource analogous to this to fall back on. What resource have we? When we are asked what lead is, as I remarked, we can point to a specimen. When we are asked what hope is, we can, perhaps, answer: it is the sentiment of the shipwrecked sailor when an approaching vessel appears in sight. That is to say, we can narrate a series of events which never fail to generate "hope," and can tell our interlocutor that he can know "hope" as being the sentiment that such a series of events generates.

It seems thus that the citation of the circumstances on which some mental phenomenon is unfailingly consequent is that which, in psychology, stands in the place which actual indication occupies in physics. We learn the meaning of lead originally by having it pointed out to us. We learn the meaning of "hope" originally by having the circumstances that generate it narrated to us, and by being told that it is the emotion that they generate. It is thus obvious that, in psychology, the oral sign has a *double* function to perform; it has to perform the function that it performs in physics, and also the function that in physics is performed by indication. The appeal to fact, in psychology and the cognate sciences, can, therefore, be really nothing else but the appeal to the natural unstrained meaning of the oral signs made use of. This appeal, though its validity has never been formally recognized, is made on every page in all metaphysical controversies. It is made whenever a general statement is tested by its application to an individual instance. The natural meaning of such words as "Causation," "Object," "Quality," "Identity," is, in metaphysics, our datum and our starting-point; and is also, from another point of view, like the facts of physics, that which we have to explain and to account for. To assume the right, as Hume does, to call the same thing an "object" on one page and a "perception" on the next, is to assume the right to disregard all that we can have in the shape of fact to build upon, and means consequently to construct our philosophical systems in mid-air.

4. These considerations, it seems to me, put it beyond all question that, in psychology, causation, in order to be perceptible to us at all, must be intelligible. It must follow the analogy of mechanism, not of chemistry. We must be able to see the cause in the effect, as we see the pressures in the direction of the sides of the parallelogram, in the motion that takes the line of the resultant. If we do not see the cause in the effect, it is hard to see how we can ever recognize it to be the cause at all. An explanation that postulates a metamorphosis in which the new product has nothing in common with the old, is, in psychology, simply equivalent to no explanation

at all. Who is there that will contend that the hate of Achilles for the man "with one thing on his lips and another in his heart" had in it anything in common with the desire of reward or the fear of punishment? If it had not, however, it is useless to tell us that the one was evolved from the other. Such an explanation is one that we could never have any reason for believing to be the true one. We might as well say that his hatred of lying seemed to us to have been evolved from the sense of humor, or from the circulation of the blood. The one description of statement is not a whit less verifiable than the other.

5. Putting aside, then, the theory that such a mental phenomenon as the conception and obligation of justice is derived either directly or indirectly from the fear of punishment, we have the problem before us—what is its nature and what is its origin? Even if, as regards the latter, we should agree that it is something ultimate and unanalyzable, there would still be many questions left to answer. Are we to view it under the category of a sense perception—the Moral Sense, as it is often called—or, with Cudworth and with Kant, under the category of Reason? The latter conception appears *primâ facie* to be so far the right one that the alternative view of it, as a sense, would leave us altogether at a loss to account for the fact that, in Jurisprudence, as well as in the more special province of Ethics, questions as to the justice and injustice of individual actions are decided by processes of thinking, to all appearance, perfectly analogous to the processes by which we decide as to the truth or falsity of individual assertions. If, however, we view it as Reason pure and simple, we are viewing it as a lever without a fulcrum. In speculative thought, the process of ratiocination has always something to work upon that is not the product of reason itself, and so it must surely be in ethical thought. Reason aids us to ascertain what is true and what is false, but it does not give truth or falsity their meaning. In the same way it aids us to ascertain what is just and what is unjust, but assuredly it does not give justice and injustice their meaning. What is it, we may ask, that in each case does?

6. The difficulty of understanding what truth is, as contrasted with falsity—one of the long-standing problems of Metaphysics—will perhaps be simplified for us if we reflect that it is a wrong conception of words and their meanings to imagine that they were made for us to think by. Their primary object was the communication of knowledge between man and man, and their primary meaning must therefore always imply the facts of intercourse. The child gets his first conception of truth when he gets his first conception of falsehood. To begin with, he believes every statement that he understands. Presently, however, some statement is made to him which future comparison with fact falsifies. He is told, let us suppose, that on opening the door of a certain room he will see a ghost. He opens it and sees none. This gives him his first conception of what is false, and with it his first conception of what is true as contrasted with it. From this out, the notion of the true always emerges when an anticipation corresponds with fact, the notion of the false when it fails to do so. These conceptions of truth and falsity thus originally derived from the facts of intercourse are soon extended to the facts of inference. Tasting sugar, he infers that white powders are sweet; tasting salt, he is pulled up by a contradiction, and has to correct his over hasty generalization. Thus we proceed from the first rudimentary inferences of infancy to the latest discoveries of science, framing our hypotheses on the analogy of observed facts, and either correcting or confirming them by comparison with other facts. The process is always from narrower truth to wider truth. Hence it is possible for us to have a perfect and quite unhesitating assurance as to what is true and as to what is false in individual instances, while, at the same time, no one has succeeded in the task that many have attempted, of framing a universally applicable criterion of truth and falsehood generally. Kant's question, "What can I know?" seems to involve a contradiction in terms. It assumes the possibility of deciding as to what we can know to be true before we know what it is that is in question. Among the things, at any rate, which he decided that we could not know, was the law of the evolution of species,



which it is the great triumph of biological science in our age to have established. Mill, too, who had his own criterion of what we can know, so applied it as to class the undulatory theory of light, a theory now as firmly established as gravitation itself, among the matters which lie beyond the scope of human inference. Thus the difficulty or impossibility of framing these universal criteria is not confined to Ethics. It is just as applicable to the case of truth and falsehood as it is to the case of right and wrong; and thus the fact of its existence need no more tend to invalidate, in particular cases, our judgments as to what is right and what is wrong, than it tends in particular cases to invalidate our judgments as to what is true and what is false.

7. Returning, however, to the ethical question on which we are immediately engaged, we have seen what it is that gives truth and falsehood their meaning; what is it, we have to inquire, that similarly gives justice and injustice theirs? Unquestionably the man who, to his own detriment, avoids an action simply because it is unjust must, as Kant strongly puts it, be held to have avoided it altogether for its own sake, and not even in any remote or indirect fashion, from the thought of any "hypothetical imperative." If it should appear even that he has avoided it from such a consideration as his fear of the disapproval of those whom he loves on earth, or of a God whom he reverences in heaven, his motive, no matter how creditable to him, is still a motive widely removed from the pure sentiment of duty. It is only when the inner law, "Thou shalt not," enforces its edict without any hint of consequences, that he is animated in the true sense, by the sentiment of moral obligation. That a law can enforce itself without a hint of penalties in any shape, in case of disobedience, was a phenomenon that justly excited the awe-struck wonder of the philosopher; and the fact will still always remain a marvellous one, even if it admits of something further being said in the way of its explanation.

8. The analysis of the facts of volition, a subject which has largely occupied the attention of psychologists, has made

the doctrine familiar to us, that before any conscious act of a human being can become a fact of the outward world, it must have existed as a representation in the mind that contemplates its performance. It is further a psychological doctrine that may be regarded as well established, that the conception of ourselves is primarily moulded on the conception of our fellows, and not conversely. The earlier mental fact is the recognition of the personality of others; the later, the recognition of our own. There is a stage, indeed, in the development of baby life when the child naturally speaks of himself by his proper name. He will say, for example,\* "Charles is going out for a walk," instead of "I am going out for a walk." It is only later that he elaborates a signification for "Me and I." Plainly, then, we should naturally expect to find all the incidents of the conception of external personality, in some way or other, applicable to our own; and we do thus find such mental phenomena as self-pity and self-distrust manifestly modelled on the pity or the distrust that is ordinarily directed by us towards others. Bearing this in mind, let us glance at the phenomena of resentment and gratitude, and at the nature of their possible reflected application. Suppose the child receives an unprovoked or treacherous blow from one of his fellows, a double reaction will result, one or other aspect of which, according to the idiosyncrasies of his nature, will predominate. On the one hand, there will arise the dread of receiving another such blow, and the thought of how to escape it or to guard himself against it. From this, no doubt, nothing but hypothetical imperatives can ever be evolved. On the other hand, however, there will arise the impulse to punish the offender, and with this, I think, it will be found that the case is otherwise. Our difficulty, indeed, in conceiving how it is possible that the inner law can enforce itself without the threat of consequences is due, we may find, to our leaving one whole side of our emotional nature out of account. This impulse to punish an offender extends far beyond the limits of humanity. It characterizes, as we

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\* The illustration is Mr. Sully's.

know, the mental reactions of most of the higher quadrupeds and birds, and it has its analogies far down in the lower world. Returning, then, to the conscious act, let us suppose that we are tempted to obtain some advantage for ourselves by betraying the trust reposed in us by another. Necessarily we represent ourselves as doing the contemplated act before we do it; necessarily, also, our self-representation is made, if I may so put it, *sub specie alius*. Does it not follow, therefore, that the anger that such an act would arouse if done by us to another will, in some shape, emerge, in respect of ourselves when contemplated as about to do it to another? In all this there is no thought of consequences; merely the contemplated act is presented, and the sentiment of indignation, perhaps of hatred, towards the perpetrators of such acts, whoever they may be, is aroused. The sentiment may, of course, be overborne by other considerations, and the act be still perpetrated in spite of it. Mechanics, however, also familiarizes us with the conception of a cause, not only existent, but fully effective, though to all appearance its effect is overborne by some other cause. The transformation of resentment, become impersonal, into the sense of justice, the voice of conscience, the pangs of remorse, is no doubt a transformation that is not at the first glance obvious. It is not, however, one of the chemical type, but one of the mechanical. We need postulate, for it, no metamorphosis that is involved in insoluble mystery. The very meaning of remorse is self-hatred; its very etymology implies such a meaning. We can arrive at our conclusion deductively. The known facts of antevolitional self-representation, together with the known fact of the emergence of anger at the experience of injuries, form a *vera causa*, a cause whose effect we must seek for somewhere. We find it plainly in the Categorical Imperative, in the simple "Thou shalt not" that meets us when we contemplate doing ourselves that which we should resent as detestable if done to us by others.

9. One of the weakest points in the Kantian theory lies in the fact that it takes account of nothing but negative virtue. The man or the woman, indeed, who deliberates, but eventu-

ally does right, appears, in his system, to be viewed as occupying a higher plane of morality than the simple noble nature that never entertains a thought of baseness. His moral law—a law pure and simple—may give us the line that must not be transgressed, but leaves the sentiment that we entertain towards the conspicuously noble and heroic altogether unaccounted for. As the explanation of the prohibitive aspect of the Conscience is to be found in the transformation of resentment, so, I think, the explanation of its positive aspect, of the approval, carried to any pitch of enthusiasm, that we accord to virtue, is to be found in the transformation of gratitude. If another helps us in our time of need, and if our nature is not altogether base, the hope of returning the good offices received, takes its place among the purposes of our lives. If we see a bystander assisted, in his time of need, by a third, a modified form of the same feeling emerges, which we call admiration or approval. If we ourselves perform good offices to others, our own approval is necessarily reflected on ourselves. The same principle, plainly, that makes us condemn the treachery of a Clytemnestra, makes us admire the self-devotion of an Alcestis, or the lofty “scorn of consequence” of an Antigone.

10. We have been led by one of the greatest of our poets, and perhaps the greatest of our critics of the Victorian era, to adopt, as regards the historical aspect of morality, a sharp antithesis between Hellenism and Hebraism. From the Greek, we are told, we have derived æsthetic refinement and intellectual culture; from the Hebrew, truth and justice. Goethe's Iphigenia, it is often said, is no echo of the thought of antiquity; she is a modern Jeanie Deans in classical costume. Such a conception does scanty justice to our ancient cousins of the common Aryan stock. It suggests, too, the absence of that deep organic connection which assuredly exists between the advance of intellectual culture and the advance of moral ideals, as well as between national strength and national virtue. If the Greek character had really been what such a theory assumes, Greece would never have rolled back the tide of Asiatic invasion, nor, in a subsequent generation, have Grecianized Asia itself. Where is it that we find this absence of

the moral ideal in ancient Greece? Not surely in her Philosophy. The strong point both of Plato and of the Stoics, as well, indeed, as of Aristotle, was their Ethics. Not surely in her Drama. It would be hardly too much to say that the Inner Law, the pure Categorical Imperative, has never been so nobly set forth as it was by the tragedian Sophocles. "Nothing," says his Antigone, the maiden who was "to herself a law," "can be so dreadful as not to die with honor." How wide a gulf she discerns between the edict of the Civil Magistrate and

"the unwritten laws divine."

"Immutable, eternal, not like those

Of yesterday, but made ere Time began."

The theme of the "Philoctetes" is the struggle between honor and policy in the mind of the son of Achilles, the hero who hated a lie more than the gates of Hell, and it is honor that, in the end, gains the day. In spite of the casuistry of Ulysses, the type of the Utilitarian statesman, in spite of a case rendered almost overwhelmingly strong by the considerations both of patriotism and of worldly wisdom, Neoptolemus finds himself, in the end, incapable of carrying out his half-perpetrated fraud, and gives back to the obstinate, unreasonable, half-demented hero, the arrows, which he had only to retain to insure victory for his country and unequalled prestige for himself. With admirable truth to nature, Sophocles makes the sentiment of self-hate at the perpetration of a fraud only arise, in its full force, when the fraud is already half accomplished. In the modern self-conscious nature, such sentiments arise earlier. Hence, other things being equal, the advance of cultivation, and, with it, of self-consciousness, must go together with the increased efficiency of the moral ideal as a causal agency. The grandeur of the personages of Greek tragedy is, in the main, an ethical grandeur. The dominant fact is the absence, as a motive of action, of the "hypothetical imperative." Even the ill-fated Polynices, his country's enemy, when he is told of the prophecy of Tiresias, never hesitates, but goes forward to his certain doom, simply because such honor as he has is bound up with his sacrilegious enterprise. Tennyson

strikes a note that sounds in unison with that of Sophocles in the words that he puts into the mouth of Pallas Athene.

“ Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.  
Yet not for power (power of herself  
Would come uncalled for), but to live by law,  
Acting the law we live by without fear ;  
And, because right is right, to follow right  
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.”

II. It is hardly necessary to say that in a paper like the present, it is wholly impossible to touch on many of the vexed questions of Ethical theory. What has been said, so far, has left almost entirely undealt with the great question of the criterion of right and wrong, except in so far as it has been suggested that it is in the highest degree necessary to discriminate carefully what we think of as such a criterion, otherwise we may find that we have set ourselves to the solution of a problem that is in its very nature insoluble ; that we are in search of a philosopher's stone or a formula for squaring the circle. If we ask what is the criterion of truth and falsehood, the answer must be,—there is none universally applicable. If we ask, however, how is it that we discriminate between what is true and what is false in any of the innumerable cases in which, as a matter of fact, we discriminate without a moment's hesitation, we find that what we do, in the last resort, in such cases, is always to appeal to the concurrence of others. What is visible or even tangible to us alone may be an illusion ; what is visible and tangible to any one similarly situated is certainly real. When the matter, the reality of which is in question, is something that is not visible and tangible at all, the test is of a much more complicated character. Similarly, in morals, it will be found that while what arouses the resentment or evokes the gratitude of ourselves alone need not necessarily be identical with what we call “bad” or “good,” that which would arouse the gratitude or evoke the resentment of any one similarly situated will always be so. If we had to explain to any one who did not know it,\* the meaning of the words “good”

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\* Nor, of course, a synonym in any language.

or "bad," as applied to any action, we could only do it by narrating to him circumstances in which gratitude or resentment would naturally emerge in the mind of the individual who was the object of the action. We have thus, in such acts, the types of the "good" and of the "bad," as we have in that in the world of sense which exists alike for all, and in that which exists for ourselves only, the types of the real and the illusory. In both cases, these types are the foundation on which Reason rears her structures. Her mode of operation, in each case, too, presents innumerable analogies; or it would be more correct to say, it is the same process dealing with a different subject-matter. We think of the "Ought" feeling as something specially pertaining to Ethics, but "Ought" is the formula of Deduction in speculative truth also. We speak as naturally of what the answer to a sum in arithmetic "ought to be" as of what a man "ought to do" in given circumstances. The basis of all speculative reasoning is abstraction, the singling out of the one salient aspect of the fact that we are dealing with, and the exclusion of all others; similarly the judge, perhaps a Brutus sitting in judgment on his son, must exclude every consideration applicable to his son except such as he possesses in common with every other citizen. Hence the cultivation of the habit of accurate reasoning cultivates, beyond all question, a tendency of thought conducive to just action also. If we inquire on what ground is it that we hold all the innumerable beliefs which we do hold, but which yet can never be verified for us by comparison with fact, we find that, if we hold them with good reason, their ground is this,—that the evidence which we have for them is identical in character with the evidence which we have for the beliefs that are subject to verification. We have arrived at both by methods that are the same. Our ground is the parity of reasoning; and, working on the basis of this parity, we are continually able to widen the scope of the knowledge that we hold as valid. The same thing applies in Ethics. Mill says, with truth, that the possibility of extending knowledge beyond the bounds of observation rests on the fact that there are such things as parallel cases in nature. It was also by means of a parallel case

that Nathan was able to bring home to David the recognition of his guilt. Like speculative truth, Ethical truth, by the parity of reasoning, is ceaselessly widening out from its centre. It is the characteristic of both, also, that every increase in the extent of the structure is necessarily accompanied by a more secure establishment of the foundations on which it all rests.

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## THE DIFFICULTY OF TAKING SIDES ON QUESTIONS OF THE DAY.

No writer on popular government has been more suggestive to me than Sir Henry Maine. He had the peculiar gift of recognizing the significance of those commonplace facts which are liable to be overlooked for the very reason that they are constantly before us all the time. It would be impossible to forget the vivid impression made on my mind by his observation about the great influence exerted on the course of human affairs, from the mere "natural tendency of men to take sides." The truth of the assertion was at once apparent, and the evidences for it have been steadily cumulative through all my personal experience and study of men. But, on the other hand, as I have gone on in life, I have been impressed with the fact that there is a class of persons who show the contrary tendency and seldom take sides at all. They are reluctant to commit themselves on the great questions of the day, and oftentimes could not do so even if they made the effort. The existence of this latter class is the anomaly which I shall endeavor to analyze and explain.

An attitude of "suspended judgment" is especially characteristic of the scholar or man of letters, of the man who thinks and reads a great deal or has a wide acquaintance with facts. It accounts for the circumstance that social reform measures do not more often take their start from what we call the edu-